

Farewell Dashan Coram



Dashan Coram at Bushwick's Goodbye Blue Monday in May 2007. Deenah Vollmer photo

The world lost a small visionary with the passing of Dashan Coram last month. Founder of numerous bands (a partial list includes Huggabroomstik, Urban Barnyard, Secret Salamander, A New Lease on Life, and Friends with Benefits), label chief at Luv-A-Lot Records, producer of dozens of artists, Coram left a huge impact in the musical communities to which he belonged.

BY DEENAH VOLLMER

Remember when you met Dashan on your second night visiting New York City, on a mid-March day in 2005, at the Lit Lounge on Second Avenue because you had met Dibs earlier that night somewhat randomly because his college adviser was your high school friend's guitar teacher and he told you to go see Dibs' band Cheese on Bread play at Lit Lounge in just a few hours.

Remember you stayed until the very end of the show and wound up with Dashan in the van that belonged to the drummer of The Jeffrey Lewis Band. Remember how you went to Jeff and Jack's parents' house to drop off a Wurlitzer keyboard and then picked up Betsy from a train station (you think it was the Delancey stop) because she was vomiting. Remember how you and Dashan were dropped off at a different train station and rode uptown together. Remember how you asked about his friend "Diggs" and he said, "Who's Diggs?" and you meant Dibs. Remember you got off at 42nd Street because your mom, who was on a red eye from California, had reserved a hotel room. Remember how Dashan stayed on the train to

Remember the night he asked you to join Huggabroomstik and you weren't sure you had ever been so flattered.

Harlem. Remember how when you got off the subway lighting broke up the sky above Times Square?

Remember how surprised you were that New York felt not only so comfortable, but also like the real deal. Remember how worried you were that New York would not feel like the real deal, but then you met Dashan and you thought, "Hey, maybe this is the real deal." Remember how if you hadn't ventured to Lit Lounge that night as the hail blew sideways and you had to hold your umbrella horizontally, you probably wouldn't have moved to New York City.

Remember how you and Dibs emailed that late spring and early summer and he mailed you a mix CD. Remember how your favorite song on the CD was "The Whale Room Whale's Big Vacation" by Urban Barnyard and you had no idea that Dashan was in the band or wrote the song. Remember, months later, when you went to see Urban Barnyard play without Dashan, you would request that song, until one day you were told they couldn't perform that song without him.

Remember when Dashan asked you to
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BY NEIL KELLY

Dashan and I met during our sophomore year at The High School of Art and Design. We were sitting in the bleachers, not watching whichever sport was being played that day. He approved of my Smashing Pumpkins "Zero" T-shirt; it didn't bother him when I told him that I was a bigger fan of the shirt than the band.

Dashan was still grieving the death of his mother. He cut class a lot. He and I would hang out in the lunch room talking about music. We would skip out of school to wait on line for concert tickets and go CD shopping in The Village.

He would work at Brigade on Houston Street almost every day and on the weekends. I would always stop by whenever I could. (He'd tell me which CDs to buy and then give me a couple for free.) His dedication to that job resulted in him getting kicked out of Art and Design during our senior year. But though we were at different schools, Dashan and I just kept getting closer.

Dashan was living in his family's old apartment on West 110th Street during my first years of college. I would come down from Purchase College almost every weekend and stay at his place. We would party, play video games, eat junk food, and listen to music. Music was always on, even long after we had passed out. It was one of those weekends that Dashan and I started Huggabroomstik.

Starting a band was Dashan's idea. I wasn't very good at guitar and Dashan didn't play anything. Those facts were irrelevant to Dashan. He convinced me that we could write our own songs, and we started immediately. We recorded a couple of songs before we even settled on a band name.

Writing with Dashan was effortless. We

could write a song about anything. We wrote collaboratively and competitively. If I came over to his place with two new songs, he would have three, plus we'd write four more together.

After only a couple of weekends as a band, we played our first show at a friend's birthday party. I can't imagine what the people at that party were thinking while watching Dashan banging on pots and pans and a traffic cone, as I played my guitar badly and our friend

Tevon mouth-bassed. The magician we opened for was pretty good, though.

It was only a few short months before Dashan decided we were ready to play a real venue. I didn't think that there was any legitimate place that would have us play,

but since he booked shows for us at Acme Underground and Lion's Den, I just went along with it. We played the open mic at Orange Bear and audition night at CBGB's. Dashan would give his all every time. He believed that even if there was only one person in the audience, that one person deserved to see an interesting show.

Once, I came down from Purchase so Dashan and I could play at what he told me was the craziest open mic in NYC: the Monday night Antihoot, hosted by Lach at the Sidewalk Cafe. The room was packed, but we got seats close to the front. We got a late number, and our number didn't come up before I left, around midnight. I was probably a little relieved; I still didn't think we were that good back then. Dashan stayed at Sidewalk that night and quickly became a regular. He loved being around so many other musicians who loved music the way he did.

It was around this time Dashan started
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I can't imagine what the people at that party were thinking while watching Dashan banging on pots and pans and a traffic cone, as I played my guitar badly and our friend Tevon mouth-bassed.

Mets’ R.A. Dickey’s a Survivor, All Over

BY ARLO QUINT
Wherever I Wind Up
My Quest for Truth, Authenticity, and the Perfect Knuckleball

by R.A. Dickey with Wayne Coffey
Blue Rider Press



Closer to home, at the DeKalb County Fairgrounds, Alexandria, Tenn., June 2011. (l.): Eli, R.A., Van, Gabriel, Anne, and Lila.
Mark Tucker photo

It turns out that R.A. Dickey has no ulnar collateral ligament. He is an ‘orthopedic oddity for the ages, a physiological freak.’

As of June 14, Mets knuckleballer R.A. Dickey is 13 starts into his season with a record of 10-1, a 2.20 ERA, and 90 strikeouts. If he continues to pitch this well for a few more weeks he should, and probably will, be a first-time all-star at the age of 37.

Dickey spent this past offseason climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to raise support for Bombay Teen Challenge, a Mumbai based group

that provides shelter and services to AIDS orphans and victims of human trafficking. He’s an interesting and undeniably good guy, and, in *Wherever I Wind Up: My Quest for Truth, Authenticity, and the Perfect Knuckleball* (written with N.Y. Daily News sports writer Wayne Coffey), Dickey gives a great narrative account of how he came to be the person he is. His story is compelling and goes like this:

R.A. Dickey was born in Nashville in 1974 to working poor parents married at ages 19 and 22 because of the pregnancy. They were divorced five years later and Dickey was raised by his alcoholic mom. When he was eight years old, he was repeatedly molested by his babysitter, the daughter of one of his mother’s friends, over the course of one summer. And then in the fall, while visiting family outside of Nashville, he was raped by a 17-year-old boy.

R.A. told no one and suffered with shame and self-loathing until he was able to compartmentalize his secret and put all his energy into the escape of sports. He earns entrance into an elite prep school, becomes a born-again Christian, and excels in football, basketball, and baseball. He spends nights in vacant buildings. He receives scholarship offers for all three sports, chooses baseball, and is an All-American in his freshman year at The University of Tennessee. Then he’s an Olympic bronze medalist and the Texas Rangers’ first-round draft pick in 1996.

Dickey’s about to sign a contract with an \$810,000-signing bonus when an X-ray reveals an elbow problem. It turns out that R.A. Dickey has no ulnar collateral ligament. He says he’s perceived as an “orthopedic oddity for the ages, a physiological freak.” The Rangers, having rescinded their initial offer, sign him for \$75,000, much less than first-round money, and \$735,000 less than his original offer.

Dickey spends most of 14 seasons in the minor leagues. He loses his fastball and becomes a knuckleball pitcher out of desperation. He is miserable, in financial trouble, he cheats on his wife and hates himself

for it, and he becomes consumed by suicidal thoughts. He makes a (suicidal) attempt to swim across the Missouri River while his Oklahoma Redhawks teammates look on.

His fellow Redhawks pull him from the river a changed man. He experiences time and consciousness differently after having nearly drowned. He has a new mastery of the knuckleball and decides to talk, for the first time, about being raped. Talking about it sets him free. In the final chapters of the book Dickey learns to have hope and becomes a very good major league pitcher.

Wherever I Wind Up is an inspiring story about overcoming abuse. The story is easy to describe but the book is not simple—it’s well-written. The chapter on Dickey’s swim in the Missouri River, for instance, is an interesting study of self-delusion, group psychology, and what it means to hit rock bottom. It’s also as exciting as a good action movie—not an easy trick to manage in the space of 13 pages. And he is particularly good at including the insightful, heartbreaking details that reveal so much about the psychological effects of abuse:

‘In the span of four years, I go from Glenclyff Elementary to St. Edward School to Wright Middle School. Whatever my address I keep finding my way into tangles and still don’t care about pain. I don’t care about lots of things. At St. Edwards my uniform consists of dark green chino slacks and a collared shirt. I wake up late one day and dress in a hurry. I really have to go to the bathroom, which is downstairs, and I really don’t feel like going downstairs. It will take too much time, so I just go ahead and pee right in my pants, which are now just a little darker.

I finish getting dressed and walk to school. A block into the walk, my legs start getting chafed by the wet pants.

‘What am I doing? Why didn’t I just change my pants? ... Do I really care so little about myself?’

Yes, it was that bad. He was a middle school kid who cared so little about himself that he would just piss his pants. And if you feel like watching YouTube and crying I suggest the R.A. Dickey 700 Club appearance in which he describes his certainty that he was “less than human” and his fear that if he told anyone he had been raped that they would “run the other way.”

But there are anecdotes and photographs from the pleasant situation of Dickey’s more recent life interspersed throughout the book (beginning after chapter two) so not to depress the reader completely in the early going. And his writing has plenty of charm, even when it’s about suffering. Here are nine of my favorite lines:

“Start after start, I pitch glorified batting practice, doing wonderful things to opponents’ batting averages.”

“I have parents who smuggle flatware from Western Sizzlin.”

“We’re deep in our diamond-shaped cocoon.”

“I’ve seen it at Joe’s Village Inn and the Amber III and now I’ve seen it at Granddaddy and MeeMaw’s house.”

“You don’t win against cockroaches.”

“The grouchy pitcher kicks my shoes, then Jeff Brantley buys me shoes, and a whole lot more.”

“The sofa is comfortable but I am not.”

“I like to throw 80-mile-an-hour knucklers.”

“It would be awesome to wear red cleats, I think.”

Arlo Quint is author of the forthcoming *Death To Explosions* (Skysill Press) and an editor of *The Recluse and Brawling Pigeon*. R.A. Dickey is a valuable member of Otis Nixons, Quint’s fantasy baseball team.

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SMALL PRESS

It's Not a Mondo Bummer Editor Amy Berkowitz from One of S.F.'s Best Exports

**INTERVIEW BY
DAVID A. KIRSCHENBAUM**
Boog City recently hosted San Francisco's Mondo Bummer. In our d.a. levy lives: celebrating the renegade press series. We asked its founder and editor Amy Berkowitz how she got here, Mondo Bummer so far, and what's next.

How'd you first become interested in poetry?
I was always interested in poetry. I liked the Frank O'Hara poems we read in English class. I was lucky enough to go to a high school where we read Frank O'Hara in English class (Hunter College High School). My dad had all of Richard Brautigan's pocket paperbacks and I read them until they fell apart.
I went to college, I moved back home to N.Y.C. I wrote and read poems a lot. I wanted to get out of New York and get out of market research, so I applied to M.F.A. programs. I wound up at the University of Michigan. (Note: If winter makes you sad, I recommend not moving to Michigan.) My favorite thing about the experience was forming the Washtenaw County Women's Poetry Collective & Casserole Society (WCWPCCS) with four fellow students (Elisabeth Divis, Emma Gorenberg, Elisa McCool, and Jessica Young) and writing collaborative poems.

And how about becoming involved in the small press world?
After we'd written a year's worth of psychic sonnets together, WCWPCCS chose the best ones, edited them, and collected them in a book called *The Feeling Is Mutual*. The experience of making the book—from sorting the poems, to editing them, to laying out the pages, to the physical process of screen-printing the covers, folding the paper, and sewing the spines—was inspiring to me. This didn't introduce me to the small press world, exactly, but it did show me how easy it could be to do something as important as publishing a book.

When did you know you wanted to start a press?
This is a funny story. When I was in grad school, I volunteered as a reader for a poetry press associated with the university. During a round of readings, there was one manuscript that stood out to me as really strong and engaging and bravely different from the others in the pile. When I found out that it wasn't chosen for publication, I felt disappointed.
On a whim, I sent a Facebook message to the poet. It said: "I was really into your manuscript. I rated it highly, and I was really

He has a weird Florida surfer accent and a unique vocabulary. After spending time with him, it was completely natural for me to say things like "mondo bummer." And "mondo bummer" was just the phrase that came to mind when I wrote that message to the poet.

How does Mondo Bummer operate? Who does the editing and production work? How does the process of selecting manuscripts occur?
I handle the editing and production work and select manuscripts for publication. Some manuscripts are submitted, and sometimes I solicit work from poets.

How do you decide on the size and layout of the books?
The size and layout of the books is simple: They're printed out and stapled at the corner, and folded in thirds like a letter. I write the publication information, title, and author name on each book by hand. The books are very utilitarian; they completely prioritize getting work out into the world. No time is spent considering design. I think there is also something intimate about a book that doesn't try to be book-like, that isn't center-stapled or sewn or decorated with a cover. My friend Kendall Grady is one of my favorite poets. She hasn't published a book, but early on in our friendship, she emailed me some of her poems, and I printed them out so I could enjoy them, and they are still on my bookshelf, under "G," next to the actual books. Her "book" is one of my favorite books, and it only exists because I printed it. I wanted to share that feeling of intimacy with others.

How do you afford to run the press?
Because I'm using pretty basic materials and working on a relatively small scale, it's not super expensive to print the books. People buy books via mail, and the price includes postage. But because I always wind up giving away copies and because I accept barter for payment, I'm pretty sure I'm barely breaking even. I haven't done any precise calculations. I try not to worry about it too much.

Is there a certain kind of ms you would say is a Mondo Bummer book?
Mondo Bummer publishes work that is sincere, irreverent, and fun to read. Poems with a sense of humor and/or colloquial language tend to be a good fit. Collaborations are especially welcome. One criterion that is always considered is: If I gave this poem to a friend of mine who's not a poet, would she get it? Would she enjoy reading it without feeling alienated or bored?

After three years, how do you feel the press has lived up to your expectations? What have you been most pleased with? most want to do a little better?
I don't think I had any expectations when I started the press, I really was half joking when I came up with

the idea. So, I've been really happy with how many books we've published and how popular it's gotten. The books are carried by five bookstores in three cities, and we get orders from all over the world. As for things I'd like to improve, I'd love to see more female poets submit their work to Mondo Bummer and to other publishing venues, too. Women aren't taught how to self-promote the way men are. We have to remind ourselves to do it.

Do you see this as something you hope to do for the rest of your life?
Definitely. I figure if I'm having an especially busy year, I can just reduce the number of books I'm publishing that year. As

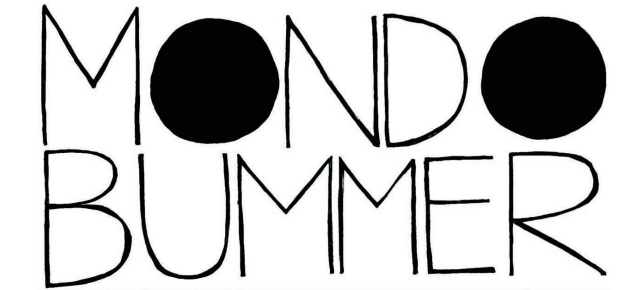
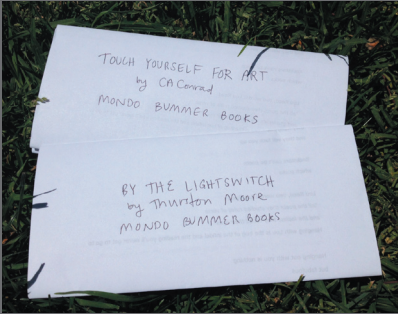
No time is spent considering design. I think there is also something intimate about a book that doesn't try to be book-like, that isn't center-stapled or sewn or decorated with a cover.

presses go, I think Mondo Bummer is fairly simple to operate, and it's definitely been a fulfilling project.

What are your hopes for the coming years of the press?
I hope to keep publishing amazing poems and distributing them to people who might not have come across them otherwise.
David A. Kirschenbaum is the editor and publisher of Boog City, a New York City-based community newspaper and small press of the same name now in its 21st year.

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Anna Vitale, *Breaststa*
Kendra Grant Malone, *Laura*
Brandon Brown, *From The Poems of Gaius Valerius Catullus*
Adam Moorad, *Herbal Essence*
CAConrad, *Touch Yourself for Art*
Katherine Valentine Jaeger, *A Museum of American Tools*



bummed that the editors didn't choose it. I would like to offer to publish the manuscript myself. The press (which I've just invented) is called Mondo Bummer books. The edition will be printed on printer paper and stapled at the corner. I'm only half kidding, Amy."
The poet never wrote back, and I'm not sure if the message ever got to him. Meanwhile, I realized that I loved the idea anyway, and decided to move forward with it.

How'd you go about starting Mondo Bummer?
I started by emailing a handful of poets I was friends with, who I thought might appreciate the irreverent spirit and deadpan aesthetic of the project. Some of them wrote back with submissions and enthusiasm. I was especially grateful for CAConrad's support.

What was the naming process?
For many years, I dated a really great person from Florida.

Sweet Home Chicago: Longtime NYC Songwriter Randi Russo Exits in Style

BY JONATHAN BERGER

It was a dark night at The Sidewalk Cafe. Not just because the gathered crowd was saddened by the inevitable departure of Randi Russo, old school AntiFolker (also called by the evening's MC, Ben Folstein, "a longtime Sidewalk-head," and, near the night's close, one of the "hardcore motherfuckers"), but because of a distinct lack of electricity in the East Village back room performance space. On May 20, during one of the Sidewalk's recent Sunday Blackout Nights, the crowd came to bid farewell to Russo with no light but the liberally placed candles—and the glow of the legally mandated Exit sign.

Russo's website curtly detailed the reason for her departure: "I'm going to CHICAGO!"

"... After many years of having the desire to leave N.Y., I've finally been called by another city."

While Russo painted it as a positive transition, sorrow seemed to permeate the proceedings.

After Hunter and Wolfe's un-amplified piano and guitar set, a succession of older AntiFolk acts hit the stage to perform and give testimony of their love and respect for one another.

The first scheduled act was Lenny Molotov, Russo's former guitarist and paramour, as well as a former Sidewalk employee. Early on in his set, he admitted, "I realized all my songs are melancholy. People may not want that." Nevertheless, he proceeded to perform blues-informed originals, as well as the occasional cover.

"This song is about heading for the wild," said Molotov. "It's called 'Wilderness Bound.'" He went on to sing the story of a narrator heading out west, alluding, intentionally or not, to Russo's imminent departure.

There were love songs, too. Considering Molotov and Russo's historic and multi-tiered relationship, it's easy to presume that some of the songs could have been originally composed with Russo in mind. Whether or not any songs were actually written for Russo, Molotov's tune "Vida Blue," detailing the southpaw's decline after a strong start, had a strong romantic resonance that seemed to fit the evening like a glove.

Molotov included two covers. First was "Sixteen Tons," performed closer to the Merle Travis original than any subsequent cover. Molotov went on to do "Another cover, for the occasion," immediately going into Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago," which clearly alluded to Russo and her immediate future.

Molotov regularly joked about the lack of light and his limited functionality in the enforced



blackout. "I can't see what I'm doing," he explained at one point, "so I gotta take the solo again." Though Molotov never referred to Russo directly in his set, his song choices continued to suggest thematic intent.

"This song is about the last days of a man called Jelly Roll Morton," Molotov intoned before singing about age, decrepitude, and past glories: "Don't give me that look, boy. I ain't one of those moldy figs ... Now I'm empty, discarded, with the faded label blues."

Set transitions during blackout nights go quicker. There is no need to verify levels, or ensuring the monitors are working to everyone's satisfaction. It's just a matter of getting up, getting into position, making sure you're in tune, and you can begin your set. During what breaks there were, the talk was about little but Russo. Overheard between acts: "I think she's done with this town; she's gotten all she can from New York, and it would behoove her to move."

Before leaving the city, though, Russo had to perform, one final time, at the first venue she ever played in N.Y.C.

Randi Russo quietly sat down, picked up her strangely strung, upside-down guitar, and played.

"The world is not made up of simple patterns," Russo sang, "she ain't leaving Saturn soon."

"I guess Saturn isn't New York," she laughed at song's end, then introduced a familiar favorite.

"This is an old one that people have told me they liked."

She went into an early track, "Push-Pull," including the refrain, "So I push / pull / push you away from me," she sang, repeatedly,

rhythmically, perhaps playing the part of a city that has not shown her the appreciation she had sought, "Come on, I want you to stay."

The song ended with an extended mantra along the lines of: "I want you to stay with me even though I keep pushing you away," closing to exuberant applause of an entire room, decidedly less ambiguous in its appreciation.

Russo followed with "Wonderland," another track from *Solar Bipolar* "which came out a while ago. I don't even want to say how long ago."

"Wonderland" deals with travel, movement, departures, and returns. The song dates back at least 10 years; who knows how long this move has been anticipated?

Between songs, she chatted about the windy elephant in the room: Chicago.

"I'm looking forward to it; I'm also scared."

"I felt a true connection to the city the last time I visited. There's this strong pull telling me that I need to be there. I haven't felt this right about something in a long time, and we all know that these moments don't come often, so we must seize them when they do come."

She reminded the crowd that, before leaving, they could get their own physical "old-fashioned CDs." Further hawking goods in fine huckster form, she yelled "Everything must go!"

Most of the material in Russo's set was older, leaning less on the new *Fragile Animals* and more on the turn of the millennium's *Solar Bipolar*, so this show served less as a retrospective of her time in New York, and more of a time capsule as her time at Sidewalk. Even the insistent presence of candles on every table was a callback to earlier days of AntiFolk.

"Parasitic People" had a driving, Velvet Underground intensity, sounding like a single player seeking to clone the soul of "Sister Ray."

Nearing the end of the set, Russo admitted, "I'll be honest: I didn't want to do this. I just wanted to start my new life. I don't have to do another show in New York. It's just such a treat to hear everyone, all these great songwriters, one last time."

"So many people here have been so supportive," said Russo. "I'm just so happy to see so many familiar faces; people that have been around for years. Words can't describe how much I appreciate it."

"Ceiling Fire" from 2006's *Shout Like a Lady*, closed her set, speaking of redemption through loss: "I am feeling higher since the ceiling burned down in the fire ... feeling like I'm ready to go. And I'm going home, 'cause everything's all right."

After an extended instrumental ending, Russo's time was done, the audience stood, thundered applause, and, for the most part, emptied out of the room. Of course, there were acts and acts to come, all prepared to wish one of their own a grand voyage.

Linda Draper, a quiet but sturdy presence

on the AntiFolk scene, began a few minutes after Russo left the stage, singing to the skeletal crew that remained over the drone of people talking at the bar. It took a song, but soon, Draper gained the audience's attention.

Between songs, Russo chatted about the windy elephant in the room: Chicago. 'I'm looking forward to it; I'm also scared.'

Draper has been releasing albums for over a decade, the last several on Planting Seeds Records, touring and making her presence known far beyond this fair city. She entertained with charm and warm, stylish storytelling.

Choice lines from her lovely set: "When you have nothing left to lose, I'll be there to comfort you. That's all I really wanted to do."

"You are the shipwreck, I am the sea. You're sinking into me. I hope you are happy now."

"Take me away from you. I'm not the one they want, my dear, even though everyone I know keeps telling me hold on, maybe it would be better if I let go."

Draper's singing resonates emotion, but also her speaking voice, so when she told the assembled, "It's been such a pleasure to share Randi's special night with her. I did not write this song for Randi—but I guess we can dedicate it to her."

The number that followed sounded like it would be explosive with a band, lead guitars, and a heavy beat shuddering within every ear. The lyrics? "I hear you're leaving town and you won't be back around. Turn it up turn it down. Turn it back around again. Everywhere that I've been keeps reminding me of the places that we used to go."

Erin Regan followed, with her elegant originals that sound like they've existed for generations.

Darkness, sadness, fits the lilting ballads of the inestimable Ms. Regan. When she sings of a last-time tryst in the perfect "Your Mom's Car," every note sounds perfect.

"You'll touch my body with your calloused hands and I forget who I am ... and you'll go home to your girlfriend, and I'll go home to my dead end ... street, where you and I never meet, please."

Every word in a Regan song is carefully selected and perfectly executed.

"Best of luck, Randi I'm going to miss you," said Regan, who spoke softly between songs.

The last word was given by the last act of the evening, Thomas Patrick Maguire, who has frequently been much covered by local singer/songwriters. Between Maguire's stylish Cobainesque acoustic numbers, he said directly to Russo: "I've always liked your music," then turned to the audience, "and Randi's a great person, she didn't have to be."

The audience laughed along with Russo and Maguire, who returned his attention to Russo: "You have good taste."

Then back to the crowd: "People are talking like she's dying: 'moving on' and all that. She'll be back, and we'll go out to visit her."

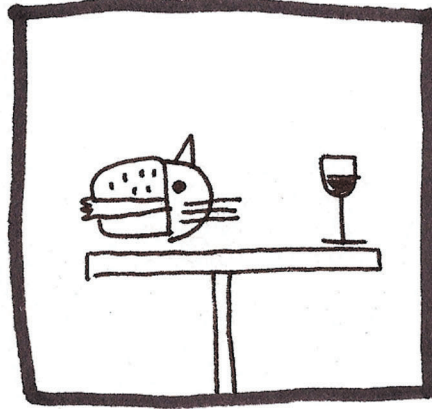
Then he sang "Divorce Man," which included the moaning refrain "I-I cannot escape," which probably speaks less for Maguire than it does for Russo, regarding her New York fans.

No, Dear

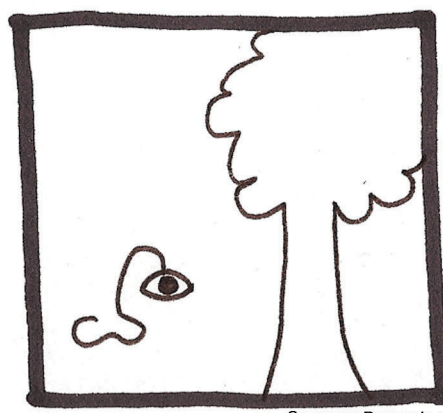
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URBAN FOLK

Farewell, Elastic No-No Band

Black No-No's Marks the End of an Elastic Era

BY JONATHAN BERGER

After eight years and an enormous amount of product, Elastic No-No Band has decided to call it quits. When one speaks of Elastic No-No Band, of course, it's usually a reference to the musical explorations of Justin Remer, who has been gracing New York's smaller stages since 2004.

When Remer started performing in town, he was a solo acoustic act, using the Ono-referenced name Elastic No-No

Fustercluck, which included lots of styles, lots of variety, and LOTS of songs.

Since then, Remer's own personal record label Weemayk Music has produced records for Joe Crow Ryan and Thomas Patrick Maguire, as well as each successive Elastic album, including the just-released farewell document, *Black No-No's*.

An Odds & Sods-style rarities album, *Black No-No's* collects live tracks, demos, alternate versions, and covers, with a smattering of new tracks, to boot. Like the last ENB release, *Black No-No's* has a kitchen sink approach, which is suitable both for a swan song (swan album?) and for the leftover nature of this release.

Among the tracks are live versions of some of Fustercluck's collaborations, including Nan Turner and Toby Goodshank reprising their roles as cover interpreters with Remer. Major Matt Mason USA, the producer of many of these tracks, trades vocals with Remer on Mason's own "Goodbye Southern Death Swing." There are guests aplenty on the album, and a host of new cover songs, from acts local and international (even Ron Sexsmith, a Canadian songwriter, is covered). "I think it might be our best album," says Justin Remer—and he should know.

New tracks appear, courtesy of Remer's involvement with the Bushwick Book Club ("Quails," "A Good Man," and "Quincunx"), his need to cover more great acts (The Beatles, George Jones, and The Clash get the treatment this time around), and old tracks are revisited due to Remer's desperate insistence that joke folk not go down without a fight ("Manboobs" and "Cheese Fries" both return). With some notable exceptions, it is, indeed, a good album.

So what does it mean that Remer has chosen to shut down the Elastic No-No brand? Is this Elastic abolishment just one of those strange alleged retirements, à la Jay Z or Cher, simply stoking interest until the inevitable upcoming album?

A recent house party at Weemayk Music's base of operations to release the album, along with continuing video footage coming out of the Weemayk camp, suggests that Remer isn't out of the business of creativity. In fact, with upcoming releases from other acts on the Weemayk roster, it seems

that Elastic No-No Band may be gone simply because the identity didn't stretch far enough for Remer's latest fancies. His collaborative sensibilities, after *Fustercluck* and *Black No-No's*, seem boundless, so why limit them with this singular band identity? Remer's influence grows like a virus, a mutated monster whose tendrils extend into more and more parts of this artistic universe. Who knows when Remer, or Weemayk, or a returned ENB may collaborate with YOU?

Among the tracks on *Black No-No's* are live versions of some of Fustercluck's collaborations, including Nan Turner and Toby Goodshank reprising their roles as cover interpreters with Remer, while Major Matt Mason USA trades vocals with Remer on Mason's own 'Goodbye Southern Death Swing.'

All you kids love listening to your Black Keys, your Black Lips, Black Dice, Black Eyed Peas, Black Moth Super Rainbow, Black Francis, Black Oak Arkansas, Black Uhuru, Black Wire, Black Sabbath, Black Kids, Black Time, Black Helicopter, Black Tape For A Blue Girl, Black Label Society, Black Nielson, Black Crowes, Black Blondie, Black Mountain, Black Angels, Black Legend, Black Bear, Black Galaxy, Black Cobra, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Black Mages, Black Ghosts, Black Affair, Black Star, Black Dog, Black Star Liner, Black Box Recorder, Black Grape, Black Vatican, and Black Flag, so this album by Elastic No-No Band is called *Black No-No's*.

Band for his musical output, which included simply played, geeky joke folk beside an assortment of covers.

By 2005, Remer coerced other songwriters to join him under the ENB banner, and then found a growing number of players to help him fulfill whatever fancy he considered. There were numerous fancies, including the themed collection *My 3 Addictions* and the smorgasbord more-is-more collection

Want to write a review (or be reviewed) in Boog's Urban Folk music or printed matter sections?

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POETRY

Katy Bohinc
Washington, D.C.

Post-Medieval

Strawberries and fresh pasta
Laid out on the year
Table of time planks
Heavy medieval knots
As long as the sea
I walked along the edge
Hunting for truffles
& bits of sage
Some candles dripped
Hot wax and flicker flame
A shadow birthed a ghost
Chaired at the head
In a ruby necklace
It was mostly dark
And I tread on a molting map
An old friend
Struck the xylophone
Against the gong
To gnaw my teeth
And raise my feet
From the sticky blood
Of borderlines
It was mostly dark
And everywhere
Parables tickled the air

Adam Fieled
Philadelphia
from Cheltenham (and other Apparition Poems)
#421

Huddled in the back of a red
Jetta, I thought we were in a
Springsteen song. But there are
no backstreets in Cheltenham.
It's only the strip-mall to house
and back circuit. Anyone could've
seen us. It wasn't a full consummation—
for want of a graceful phrase, we
were too smart to fuck. There was
no playing hero for me. Nor did I
force you to confess. What could you say?
Cheltenham was soft, and all too infested.

#415

There's something sweet and sickly
about teenagers fucking. Even laid
down by the jagged rocks that bordered
Tookany Creek. I think of them there,
and know he's getting wasted. What's
draining out of him is the will to live.
She always gets him off somehow. Then
they would walk over to the Little League
field and huddle in the dugout. He didn't
even wind up graduating from Cheltenham
on time. I can't get over thinking who he
could've been. Am I the only one?

#418


I remember thinking: boy do I feel Wild at Heart
tonight. What a joke— this horrible Cheltenham
bitch with a huge nose tries to generate an orgy in
her basement. The pot was alright, at least. But
Elkins Park gave us the creeps, and we agreed
afterwards never to go back. The fucked up thing
about that night for me in particular was knowing
we would have fun talking about it forever. And
we have, so I guess it's not a complete dead loss.
The girl I was with pretended I was fucking her, too.

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About the Poets **Katy Bohinc** edits *COYDUP Zine*, a poetry pamphlet dedicated to hand-to-hand distribution at and around Occupy events. **Adam Fieled's** most recent book is *Equations* (blue & yellow dog press), while *Cheltenham (and other Apparition Poems)* is forthcoming from Blazevox [Books]. **Susana Gardner** publishes work in print and online as part of the Dusie Kollektive (www.dusie.org). Her most recent book is *HERSO* (Black Radish Books). **Dennis Leroy Kangalee** is the author of *Lying Meat* (Savage Paw Press). His performance piece *Gentrified Minds* premiered last spring as part of the 9th Annual Downtown Urban Theater Festival. **Doug Lang's** collected poems, *In the Works*, is forthcoming from Edge Books.

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Susana Gardner

Zurich, Switzerland

Artless
Adores her itinerant
Quivering Sea of voices

Painted
Image legible
Iridescent rich& lush

Binding December alone
Eat your early paradox:
Dirty Cloak Industry

Artless is
Radiant exultant
Contractions of little mugs

Heaving& rising
Incident me:
Come, Come, Come!

Answer mechanically
Thoughts persist
Alcohol tedious thereafter

Inward damp imbecilic
Dress half undone
Evident atrocity

Ought I leave?
His harlot artfulness
Wanton carmine-tinted menacing

Ardent
Wakefulness desiring
Luscious lips diminish

Half-ships
Idempotent perfidy
Apogeic maxims

Dennis Leroy Kangalee

Astoria, Queens

A Loser Can Surely Find Time For Love

A loser can surely find time for love.

Before that I thought I was just another waking asphalt animal perched on his shaky brick-limb trying to do what it is that rats do to stay alive.
The rats are the true underground.

They’ve pulled apart the letters of alphabet city.
Don’t mind me-
-it’s just my feet are getting wet and I never realized I could swim.
The Mets
Are Citibank pets
In steel cages.
They’re sending me to the outbacks,
The caves in the dunes where books meet man
And clean hands are an ideal to achieve.

Losers
Like Loners
Make the
Best
Lovers.
They have so much to give.

They don’t need me here. Give me my apocalypse and ship me out soon.

I am not sure how long I can carry this battery.

Doug Lang

Washington, D.C.

Confucius Lives sonnet

for Sandra

If Casey, then Zachary
When Jenn, so Jess
Where Confucius lives there is Scrabble and
Freedom from historical maladaptations embedded
in the childhood script, which is required in order to become free of
inappropriate, inauthentic and displaced emotions
Yo temo que Raquelita no venga
She can transform herself into herself
How does one dissimulate oneself, one?
Her lifescrypt favors co-dependents
Avec the Invisible Opera Company of Tibet
When I see you
I am over the moon

Ampersand sonnet

Mary was the software
Who interfaced with God
Jesus was the virus
The brain’s dark energy controls

Your sexual harassment panda
Under the flickering diversions of the spectacle
Aphrodite’s abundance (don’t lose your mind)
If Casey, then Zachary

When Jenn, so Jess
I dreamed this in my dream of
Portugal’s fabulous beaches and a little pot
You know what I’m talking about & I know & I remember

Hope & Cherish & Amy & Moudy & Minami & Will
& Tim & Annie & Eleanor & Nina & Derek & Izzy

Gizmodo sonnet

for Ray DiPalma

It is all about the distance and zone focus
Although the sensitivity of the organism is unchanged
In this case, a clear, circular “halo”
With downloadable freeware to simulate effects
Comes from the popular tech website, Gizmodo
Scraps of movie posters scavenged from the streets of New York by
Low Life author Luc Sante, the bagel burned by actor
Christopher Walken, moonlighting as a short-order cook
The abstract provenance graph can therefore be used as a data-oriented
view of the ... daily actions... Thoreau’s, no
Emerson’s moral botany: corn seeds produce corn
Make the road by walking
Pessoan heteronymity of a potato queen (π function)
Biomes are collapsing everywhere

Spicer Radio sonnet

for David Berrigan

The bus stops briefly when someone cries, and no one gets off,
No one gets on, and everything stops forever like there
Are two kinds of places in the world, something that comes
From the outside as a wire reaches the afterlife of the poem

(Or, everything comes: a system of metasexual metaphor)
The clothes wherein he walks naked
The Sonnets engaged the possibility of understanding Joe Brainard
Falling on the floor in a room with no bed, the fact of 14 lines

As a site for messing around. So, do I care whether or not
God exists? No. I do care that Larry Fagin exists.
Hats off the Larry, he broke your heart
Just like you broke mine when you said we must part

This is just, you know, something I learned over in
England. Did you think I was showing off?

Farewell Dashan Coram

KELLY from page 1

taking classes at the Institute for Audio Research. He wanted to be able to make more professional-sounding Huggabroomstik recordings. He spent some of his inheritance from his mom on a 16-track digital recorder. He wanted to record all of the musicians he had met, which is how *A Luv-A-Lot Compilation* came together. Dashan recorded 46 songs by 46 different acts, all in his bedroom, and released the definitive collection of N.Y.C. AntiFolk as a double CD.

I was content to continue recording in Dashan’s bedroom and playing some shows in N.Y.C.; Dashan was always pushing forward, trying to get us to the next level. After a Knitting Factory show, Dashan introduced me to Sebastian “Sibsi” Hoffman, visiting N.Y.C. from Berlin, who told us that if we ever wanted to come to Germany, he would help us book a tour. The concept was far-fetched, but to Dashan, it was an attainable goal. About a year-and-a-half later, Dashan and Sibsi made that dream a reality, not just for Huggabroomstik, but for the WoWz and Chris Maher, too, creating the transatlantic connection between the N.Y.C. and Berlin AntiFolk scenes.

After that first tour I started thinking more ambitiously, like Dashan. Whatever new idea came up for Huggabroomstik, we would go with it. Record an album at the studio of Mark Ospovat of Dufus? Of course! Make it a double album? Why not? Put together an outdoor summer music festival? Sounds like fun! Tour Europe again and again? Yes and double yes!

On Huggabroomstik’s third European tour Dashan lost his passport before boarding the airplane at JFK, and was denied entry into the E.U. when we arrived in Berlin. The rest of us went through with the tour without him, but it was difficult. When we got back to NYC, Dashan felt his role in the band wasn’t the same. It didn’t feel right for him

anymore. About four months after that tour, Dashan abruptly quit after a show at the Sidewalk. I tried to tell him that he couldn’t quit, but I knew that he had already decided.

He moved to Detroit with his fiancé, Suz, soon after. I kept Huggabroomstik going. We did another tour, then recorded a live album of all new songs without him. Dashan and I stayed best friends, but he couldn’t stand to hear about the band that he had left. I think he probably wanted me to disband Huggabroomstik when he quit. There were a lot of reasons why I didn’t: I really wanted to keep playing with Dibs, Preston, Johnny, and Liv. I didn’t really think that I could put together a new band by myself, since Dashan had recruited everyone who ever played with us. I was also stubborn. But the main thing was that I thought if I kept Huggabroomstik going, Dashan would

One night soon after he moved back here, we were out drinking and I asked him what he thought of the live recording we had done without him, *Intimate Huggabroomstik*. Dashan told me it sucked. I knew what he meant. While there were many great things about that recording, it didn’t have the same magic as the recordings that Dashan and I had done together. I don’t think it really does suck, it just sucks that he wasn’t a part of it.

One song that we played on that album was specifically about how Huggabroomstik was missing Dashan and Johnny Dydo, who had also quit shortly after Dashan left, and how we longed for them to return. When Dashan rejoined, so did Johnny and the group felt complete again, even though Dibs and Liv had by then both moved away.

Dashan came back from Detroit with a more serious outlook toward his future. He was more in love with Suz than ever and seemed to have more dedication to his day job. Despite the changes, when we got together with Huggabroomstik, for shows, practice, or even just hanging out, it was like he had never left. We played all our old songs again, and it felt right. We fell into a pleasant little rut, playing Goodbye Blue Monday once a month. We weren’t trying to play bigger venues. We weren’t focused on writing new material. We were just having fun playing together. Playing music for its own sake was really what Huggabroomstik was originally about, because it made us happy.

Dashan made friends wherever he went. He could talk to anybody, and left a strong impression on everyone he met. He was pretty good at staying in touch, too. The first summer Dashan was back from Detroit, he invited two bands from Michigan to play the Huggabroomstock festival. The following spring, Dashan booked a Huggabroomstik tour to the Midwest.

That tour, although short and not without some hardship, *Please see KELLY page 10*

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Huggabroomstik—Dash, Liv Carrow, Neil, and Preston Spurlock—at Goodbye Blue Monday in May 2010.

Deenah Vollmer photo

want to come back eventually.

When Dashan returned to N.Y.C., I would ask him to just play one show or join us for a couple of songs. I could tell that he wanted to, but it would have to be on his own terms and conditions.

VOLLMER from page 1

take nude pictures of him with a disposable camera? Remember it was the first time you went to visit his recording studio and you were excited because you loved the Luv-A-Lot compilation a lot. Remember when you got there Dashan had to hunt for a toilet paper roll that he kept for when a girl visited. The rest of the time he used pages from the phone book. Remember how Dibs met you there, and when you opened the door to greet Dibs, Dashan was completely nude and you were dressed in full winter regalia.

Remember when Dashan invited you to play with his band Secret Salamander and you had never played with a band before. Remember how excited you were when Dashan told you that you’d have practice in a practice space because you had never been to one before and had been jealous when your friends had practice in practice spaces? Remember meeting Tina Harris that night and how you pretended to know what to do and how to play along to the songs. Remember how Dashan helped you with all the cords and amps because it was your first time being amplified. Remember how you thought you were faking it, but he thought you were doing a good job.

Remember when you and Dashan went to Dibs’ house to eat HuFu, human flavored tofu? Remember Dashan described the flavor as “musky.” Remember how you were kind of a vegan around that time and you didn’t know

why, but in hindsight it probably had a lot to do with Dashan.

Remember in the summer, the countless days you spent walking around the East Village together, drinking whiskey with Coke, whiskey with ice tea, or whiskey with Vitamin Water. Remember pausing on strangers’ stoops or on benches in Tompkins Square Park? Remember the conversations you had in the daylight. Remember how everything he said was simultaneously so ridiculous and so true. Remember how much you looked up to him, how cool you thought his hair was.

Remember how long you felt so new and so young? Remember when Phoebe read your tarot cards and you were the Fool, which was a good thing. Remember, later, when Dashan told you it was good that you weren’t as eager as you used to be. Remember how embarrassing it was, years later, to read emails you sent in 2005. You were so eager and Dashan taught you how to be less eager, which meant to be more cool.

Remember when you went to Coney Island at night with Neil and Austin and the guard dogs threw themselves at the chain-linked fences dividing the amusement parks. Remember, during the heat wave, Dashan and Luke would come around to your apartment and take their shirts off and you would all drink beer on your silver-

painted roof. Remember how he’d buy Teddy Grahams and stay the night.

Remember the crazy parties you threw on that rooftop. Remember the last one in July of 2007 after you had moved all your things out. Remember that was the night he asked you to join Huggabroomstik and you weren’t sure you had ever been so flattered. Remember it was so hot and you had no furniture so you, Dashan, and Austin slept on the rooftop and were awoken in the morning by the clapping of boots and the jangle of keys and you realized you were in big trouble because you were not allowed to even be on the roof, never mind throw huge parties on it. Remember the guy with the keys and the boots said he was calling the police. Remember how you

ran away and felt like the cops were chasing you? Remember how Dashan laughed and thought you were so white.

Remember when both you and Dashan had crushes on Diane Cluck and you decided you would ask her out on a three-way date, but then you both felt too shy to go through with it.

Remember when he taught you to hate the word “awesome,” and replace it with the word “key.” Remember when he changed every word in every song to “Dave.” Remember he left you a seven second voicemail where he sang “Dave river, Dave” and that was the last voicemail you would receive from him.

Remember he left you a seven-second voicemail where he sang ‘Dave river, Dave’ and that was the last voicemail you would receive from him.

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is the 2012 Green party senate
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cial assistant to Medgar Evers,
field secretary for the NAACP.

Starlee Kine
is a contributor to
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Judith Le Blanc
is N.Y. organizer for Peace
Action, the longtime peace
group that was SANE/FREEZE

Antonio Serna
helps to facilitate the Occupy
Wall Street Arts Cluster

Laurie Wen
is the executive director of
Physicians for a National
Health Program-New York
Metro chapter.

artwork by Sommer Browning

Farewell Dashan Coram



Dashan and his brother Chris in their backyard in Harlem, 2003.

Eric Lippe photo

KELLY *from page 8*
was rejuvenating. It was a throwback to those first tours of Europe. Dashan’s excitement was contagious. We started having ideas for the band and we starting making plans again. We were coming up with new ideas for songs. We were discussing plans for recording.
Almost immediately upon returning, Dashan

wrote a new song called “You’re So Dave.” We wrote a new song together called, “Tiger Slickness.”
Last fall we played a few notable shows. The first was a two-hour set at the wedding of Dan Penta and Erin Regan, at which we had Liv Carrow playing bass for the first time in over a year. The second was a set that Dashan and I played as a duo at the Brooklyn Tea

Party, where we premiered “You’re So Dave” and “Tiger Slickness.” The third was Seth Faergoalzia’s Rochester event, Fakesgiving Festival, featuring performances by his band, The 23 Psaeges, The Ladies of Old Hat, Toby Goodshank, Amos Rose, and a set in which we all collaborated. It was an amazing experience. Seth had been inviting Huggabroomstik to Rochester for a while, and I am really glad that we got to go before the end.

When Suz called to tell me that Dashan died, I was shocked. What about all the unfinished business we had? Dashan and I were supposed to get together to do some songwriting, but we kept putting it off. Last year Dashan and his brother Awan started working on a hip-hop album that I, among many others, had contributed to. It was sort of on the back burner while Dashan worked on his new Secret Salamander album, which thankfully did get finished. We wanted to record a bunch of short, one-minute Huggabroomstik songs to release on a 7”. We were going to put together a boy-band routine for this summer’s Huggabroomstock, which was going to be the only Huggabroomstik show of the year.

We were still making plans the last time Dashan and I hung out—only six days before he died. Dashan and Suz came to my apartment. It was typical: We watched a bad movie, *The Return to Oz*. We talked about other bad movies, mostly ones starring Steve Guttenberg. We drank and smoked

I think he probably wanted me to disband Huggabroomstik when he quit. There were a lot of reasons why I didn’t, but the main thing was that I thought if I kept Huggabroomstik going, Dashan would want to come back eventually.

and had silly conversations. He invited me to go see Radiohead. We talked about the band. There was so much to do, and now there isn’t.

I suppose, though, that no matter when I lost him, there would always be unfinished business. Dashan was always looking at the future and always dreaming up something else we could do.

Dashan taught me a lot of things about music and myself. He was the ultimate friend-fan. He loved the music his friends made and he wanted to be friends with the people whose music he loved. So many of my closest friends now are people who Dashan introduced me to, whom he had discovered at Sidewalk Cafe or one of his other regular hangouts. He encouraged many of his friends to make music, regardless of their level of skill. Dashan could just draw the music out of a person. That is one of the greatest gifts he gave to me. I will never be able to play music, or even listen to music, without thinking of Dashan. He was absolutely the greatest friend that I have ever had, and I am going to miss him every day for the rest of my life.

Neil Kelly was a founding member of Huggabroomstik, and now plays drums in Kung Fu Crimewave. He misses his friend.

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